

Outfitter/Guide Operating Safety Plan
Chugach National Forest

Operating and Safety Plan

Appendix A

Fishing and Boating (excluding whitewater rafting)

The following stipulations are to be included in the Operating Safety Plan for each of the activities listed below. For river boating activities, put-ins and take-outs need to be indicated on map attached to permit.

1. ***Fishing***

Protection of Fisheries Habitat and Streambank Restoration

- Avoid steep banks and water saturated soils when entering and exiting the river or lake.
- Fish IN the river or lake rather than from the river or lake bank to reduce erosion and vegetation impact.
- Use existing trails and boardwalks when walking along the river or lake.
- Stay off all shore-side vegetation.
- Stay out of areas that are closed to protect fish habitat and cultural resources.

2. ***Boating***

- Boating life vests must be worn at all times.
- U.S. Coast Guard laws and regulations must be complied with.
- Use only established boat launch areas, so as to protect streambank vegetation and fish habitat.

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Appendix B

Hiking, Camping, and Campfires

The following stipulations are to be included in the Operating Safety Plan for each of the activities listed below.

A. *Trail Use*

- Shortcutting switchbacks or trails are prohibited. Non-system trails will not be repeatedly used, cleared, or created. Authorization to use or maintain existing non-system trails must be obtained from the District Ranger or his or her delegate.
- Coastal Hiking – Avoid trails that show slight signs of use. In remote areas, either spread out or hike on durable surfaces.

B. *Camp Operations*

- Avoid camping close to water and trails and select a site, which is not visible to others.
- If a fire breaks out in camp, the outfitter will take immediate charge for suppression of the fire. Employees will be aware at all times of the location of buckets, shovels, fire extinguishers, and other firefighting equipment.
- Permanent camps and/or improvements are not allowed.
- Caches of equipment or gear are not allowed unless specifically authorized.
- Care shall be taken to prevent contamination or pollution of natural water sources. Equipment, dishes, clothes, and bodies will be washed at least 300 feet from any water source.
- Camping is not allowed within a minimum of 300 feet from Forest Service public use cabins. Further evaluation will take place on a case-by-case basis.
- When the campsite is dismantled, the area is to be left clean. All evidence of use will be removed and the site will be naturalized by scattering organic material over the area.
- Standing dead or live trees or branches of live trees will not be cut.

Or: In remote areas of low use the following is allowed on a case by case basis:

In general standing trees should not be cut but cutting of dead and down trees is allowable for firewood. Do not cut eagle nesting or roosting trees. Cutting of non-dominant or unhealthy green trees for use as poles or camp facilities may be allowed for trees less than 6" in diameter.

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- Food, food related items, and garbage must be stored acceptably. Acceptable storage is: 1) stored in a bear-resistant container, 2) stored in a closed vehicle constructed of solid, non-pliable material, or 3) suspended at least 15 feet clear of the ground at all points and four (4) feet horizontally from any supporting tree or pole.
- Cooking/eating areas need to be separated from sleeping areas to reduce human/bear interactions.
- Disturbance to vegetation will be minimized by: 1) not chopping, carving, or cutting live trees or disturbing plants, 2) not leveling ground for tent sites, 3) not building drainage trenches around tents or campsites.
- Guides must provide for client health and safety while camping. This includes but is not limited to food preparation and storage, water treatment, toilet facilities, and refuse disposal.

C. *Fires*

When building a fire please use Leave No Trace practices.

- Use stoves to minimize the impacts from open fires.
- The amount of dead and down wood and driftwood at the site, fire hazard, the need for a campfire, and suitability of a site must be evaluated before a fire is started. Fires will be built using a fire pan, a mound fire, or existing fire pits. Rock rings will not be constructed. Do not construct fires under trees, in roots, or on duff layers. Use dead and down wood and/or driftwood that is no larger than the diameter of an adult's wrist. Burn wood down to white ash or very small coals. Before leaving camp make sure all embers are dead out, scatter all ashes and cover fire site with a thin layer of sand, gravel or dirt.

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Appendix C

Use of Livestock

The following stipulations are to be included in the Operating Safety Plan for each of the activities listed below.

1. *Use of Livestock (Horses, llamas, etc.)*

- Only safe, sound, well-broken saddle and pack stock will be used.
- Racing and other hazardous horsemanship practices will not be allowed.
- All riders will be given specific instruction concerning stock handling.
- Stock should not be tied to trees for more than two hours or the time needed to pack, unload, or saddle animals. Stock restrained for longer periods of time will be highlined, picketed, or hobbled. Trees used for highlining or tying will be at least four inches in diameter, at chest height.
- Temporary electric fence corrals are authorized for control of livestock.
- Loose herding of stock is not allowed.
- Only livestock actually used for a particular operation shall be permitted.
- The use of saddle, pack, or draft animals on Kenai Peninsula trails from April 1st to June 30th is prohibited (Forest Order No. 96-06-27, pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50(b) and Regional Order R-10-96-01). In the event of a light snow year, fast snow melt, and trails that are dry earlier than July 1, permission may be obtained by the Holder from the Seward District Ranger prior to taking a saddle, pack, or draft animal on the trails early. If damage occurs, the Seward District Ranger will be informed so a decision can be made as to whether the use should continue.
- The following is prohibited: Hitch, tether, or hobble a horse or other saddle or pack animal within 200 feet of an established trail, lake, or developed recreation site, including Forest Service recreation cabins (Forest Order No. 96-04-24, pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50 (a).)
- When camping is authorized, use of dead and down wood for camp accessories such as hitch and game hanging rails, and tent frames is permitted. When camps are dismantled, wood will be scattered or placed so as to blend into the natural setting.

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Appendix D

Mountain Biking

The following stipulations are to be included in the Operating Safety Plan for each of the activities listed below.

Mountain Bikes

- All recreation users including users with livestock have the Right of Way. Be courteous to other recreation users. If there is not enough room on the trail to get by, pull over and/or dismount from bike to allow other recreational users to pass by.
- Clients should be instructed in the techniques of “low impact riding”, including walking through muddy areas rather than riding through them.
- Ride single file.
- Ride on the right side of the trail.
- Maintain slow speeds when there is minimal sight distance.
- Mountain bike trips are not allowed until snow has melted from the trails and the trails have had a chance to drain and dry out.
- Mountain bike personal protection gear needs to be worn at all times by the guide and the clients.

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Appendix E

Whitewater Rafting

The following stipulations are to be included in the Operating Safety Plan for each of the activities listed below. All put-ins and take-outs need to be indicated on map attached to permit.

1. *Whitewater Rafting in whitewater rated as Class IV in difficulty or higher*

Personal Gear

- Helmets.
- Type 5 Life Jacket.
- Thermal protection (dry suit, wet suit, combo, and/or dry top).
- Foot protection.
- Gloves (optional).
- Booties (optional).

Safety Gear

- Extensive 1st aid kit.
- Safety gear.
- Extensive rescue gear.
- Boat repair kit.
- Quality whitewater, multi-chambered rafts and/or quality whitewater kayaks.
- Throw lines.
- Rescue ropes.

Safety Procedures

- Pre-scouting of the river.
- Safety talk, written outline used by all guides for consistency.
- Scout rapids.
- No single boat commercial trips (two different companies commercial boats traveling together, ok).
- Designated trip leader.
- Provide a day use toilet for clients to use.

Updated Annual Operating and Safety Plan, to include

- Resumes of guides, showing whitewater experience.
- Guide training: search and rescue procedures, 1st aid, CPR, and accredited swift water rescue.
- Risk management assessment.
- Detailed emergency and rescue plan

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Client Fitness

- Evaluate clients on fitness, swimming ability, health, and experience.

Search and Rescue Procedures

- Ground support with throw ropes
- Watercraft extraction gear
- Communication system.
- Planned evacuation routes.

Water Level

- Required to evaluate water level before each trip.
- For water level information please check the USGS internet address: <http://www-water-ak.usgs.gov> to see if there is a gage near the river corridor. If there is, check the water level regularly on the internet site.

2. *Whitewater Boating in Sixmile Creek*

- Ground support in all three canyons with throw ropes and other safety equipment, not including the put-ins & take-outs.
- Guides must have a minimum of 6 training runs on Sixmile Creek before guiding a commercial trip.

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Appendix F

Access through Seward Ranger District Recreation Facilities

The following stipulations are to be included in the Operating Safety Plan for each of the activities listed below.

1. *Russian River Campground Access and Parking*

Drop-offs and pick-ups within the Russian River Campground Complex are allowed to access the Lower Russian Lakes trailhead, without charge. If vehicles need to be parked within the Russian River Campground Complex to access trails, parking must be paid for in accordance with the Russian River Campground Concessionaire rules and regulations, on a space available basis.

2. *Primrose Trail Access and Parking*

No parking is authorized within the Primrose Campground. Vehicles need to be parked in the boat ramp parking area. The Holder must comply with any applicable campground concessionaire rules and regulations.

3. *Use of Quartz Creek Campground Boat Launch*

Pick-up and drop-off of clients and use of the boat launch is allowed. Parking is not allowed within the Quartz Creek Campground, Boat Launch, or Day Use Area. Parking needs to be arranged with owners of nearby private land.

4. *Quartz Creek Access*

Quartz Creek can be accessed through Crescent Creek Campground. Parking is only allowed in the Crescent Creek Trailhead parking lot. Access and parking is not allowed from the Quartz Creek Campground. The Holder must comply with any applicable campground concessionaire rules and regulations.

5. *Ptarmigan Creek Trail Access*

The Ptarmigan Creek trail can be accessed from the Day Use Area and Trailhead within the Ptarmigan Creek Campground Complex. Parking is only allowed within the Ptarmigan Creek Trailhead parking lot. The Holder must comply with any applicable campground concessionaire rules and regulations.

6. *Access to Summit Lake from Tenderfoot Campground*

Boats can be launched from the Tenderfoot Campground into Summit Lake. However, vehicles are not allowed to be parked in the Tenderfoot Campground. Vehicles must be parked in pullouts along the road to Tenderfoot Campground or arrangements need to be made to park vehicles on private land.

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Appendix G

Winter Travel

The following stipulations are to be included in the Operating Safety Plan for each of the activities listed below.

A. *All travelers*

- Observe all Forest Orders (See attached Orders No. 97-10-10 & 97-2-13).
- Evaluate and monitor the hazards associated with your type of travel.
 - Avalanche conditions
 - Past, current & predicted weather conditions
 - Physical hazards
- Amount and type of safety gear should be commensurate with the type of winter travel i.e., heli-skiing vs. snow machining vs. cross-country skiing. Examples include: first-aid kit, rope, fire starter, bow saw, shovels, tool kit/spare parts, space blankets, heat packs, flash light, signaling devices, compass, avalanche transceiver-beacons, epirob, etc.
- Evaluate clients fitness, health and experience.
- Be courteous to other recreation users.
- Permanent camps and/or improvements are not allowed.
- Caches of equipment or gear are not allowed unless specifically authorized.
- Harassment of wildlife will not be tolerated. When moose, goats or other wildlife are observed, adjust routes to avoid adverse impacts.
- All refuse will be packed out

B. *Sküing & Snowmobiling*

- Maintain a buffer of 330 feet between any active Bald Eagle nest and the tour group after March 1.
- Provide transportation for clients to and from trailhead/parking areas to ensure enough parking room for all winter recreation users.

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Appendix H

Guided Helicopter Activities

The following stipulations are to be included in the Operating Safety Plan for each of the activities listed below.

A. *Aircraft Operations*

- Daily Operations
- Flight Following
- Lost persons or aircraft protocol
- Aircraft orientation and briefing
- Protocol for landing zones
- Fueling procedures
- Noise mitigation (eg. Community approach/departure flight paths, elevations, etc.)
- Conflict mediation (eg. with other backcountry users)
- Aircraft operators experience and qualifications
- Resource impact mitigations
(eg. Distance or elevation restrictions to reduce impacts to wildlife)

B. *Communication*

- Communication Plan and Procedures
- Radio and Dispatch Organization and location
- Hazards Evaluation and Forecasting (eg. Avalanches, ground conditions, weather, rock slides, glacier monitoring etc.)
- Gathering/Recording meteorological data (eg. Snow pack data, weather forecasts, web pages, etc.)
- Evaluation procedures
- Hazards activity record (eg avalanche history, weather patterns, ground stability)
- Hazard mitigation (“go/no go” protocols)

B. *Emergency Procedures/Mobilization Plan*

- Emergency classifications
 - a) Resources on site sufficient to handle situation
 - b) Chronology of Procedures (resources available, contacts, etc.)
 - c) Additional Support required
 - d) Protocol for Injuries

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- e) Accident or incident protocols;
 - Overdue/missing aircraft
 - Aircraft breakdown
 - Other emergencies
 - Emergency, first aid & Rescue Equipment pertaining to Aircraft operations
 - a) Equipment locations
 - b) Equipment contents
 - c) Specialized equipment
 - Emergency phone number appendix
 - Accident reporting

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Appendix I

Access and Parking on Glacier Ranger District

1. Twentymile River: No client parking is authorized at Twentymile River boat launch parking area, southwest side of Seward Highway, due to its small size. Only the Holder is authorized to park in this area. However, vehicles can be parked in one of the other dispersed parking areas near the boat launch.

Twentymile River permit holder shall make contact with and check the schedules of other Holders prior to each trip on Twentymile River to avoid potential conflicts.

2. Granite Creek: Boats can be launched from the Granite Creek Campground. However, vehicles are not allowed to be parked in Granite Creek Campground. Vehicles can be parked in designated pullouts along the Seward Highway.

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Appendix J

Group Size and Restrictions for Seward Ranger District Guided Activities

The following stipulations are to be included in the Operating Safety Plan for every applicable Seward RD guided activity listed below:

Group Size

Group sizes and client/guide ratios designated for outfitter/guide groups on the Seward Ranger District are as follows:

- Hiking – 10 clients/2 guides for a maximum group size of 12 people. If there are any groups larger than 12 people, they will be split into groups no larger than 12 people and spaced at least ½ hour apart on the trail.
- Mountain biking – 5 clients/1 guide for a maximum group size of 6 people and bikes. A group size of 10 clients/2 guides is also allowed, as long as the group splits up into 2 groups for travel.
- Whitewater Rafting – 7 clients/1 guide, per raft.
- Llama Use – 8 clients/2 guides, and 6 llamas
- Horse Use – 6 clients on horses /1 guide on a horse for a total of seven horses. The total group size of 7 horses includes pack horses also.

Limits and Restrictions for particular Locations

- 1) Use of the Upper and Lower Paradise Lakes platforms will not be authorized.
- 2) Camping is not authorized in the hardened site where Ptarmigan Creek leaves Ptarmigan Lake.
- 3) Use of mountain bikes will not be authorized for the following trails:
 - Carter Lake Trail
 - The trail along Crescent Lake
 - Primrose/Lost Lake Trail System
 - Victor Creek Trail
 - Grayling Lake Trail
 - Resurrection River Trail
 - Ptarmigan Creek Trail
 - Hope Point Trail
 - Gull Rock Trail
 - Summit Creek Trail
 - The Iditarod Trail along Bear Lake.
- 4) Horse and llama use will not be authorized for the following trails:

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- Primrose/Lost Lake Trail System
 - Ptarmigan Creek Trailhead and Campground.
- Access to Ptarmigan Creek Trail is through the use of the Falls Creek Road.
- Victor Creek Trail
 - Grayling Lake Trail
 - Hope Point Trail
 - Lower Russian Lake Trail
 - The Iditarod Trail along Bear Lake trails.
 - Summit Creek Trail

For horse guiding that occurs on Quartz Creek Beach, all manure must be picked up and disposed of according to appropriate laws and regulations.

5) Snowmachines are not allowed on National Forest System lands until after December 1st. Snowmachines are not allowed on the Resurrection Pass and Devil's Pass trails from February 16 through November 30th.

6) The Manitoba Mountain area is closed to all motorized vehicles. The Mills Creek Road is closed to all motorized vehicles from December 1st through March 15th.

7) Camping and Fires are prohibited within ¼ mile of the Sterling Highway from milepost 50.5 to milepost 55 and within ¼ mile of the Russian River campground and entrance road.